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Claims

[c1] A method for classifying a meat cut and trimming the fat therefrom comprising the steps of:
conveying a meat cut along a split multi-belt conveyor having a plurality of proximately spaced conveyor belts extending in parallel along a path of conveyance having a plurality of uniform gaps there between;
probing the meat cut with a probe assembly having a plurality of elongated laterally aligned probes operable to sense a fat to lean interface of the meat cut where each of said probes are aligned along one of the gaps;
selectively driving the probe assembly with a drive effecting elevation and lowering of the probe assembly along a circular path for insertion and retraction of the probes;
tipping the probe's tip forward along the path of conveyance with the conveyance of the meat cut during insertion in the meat cut; and
sensing the fat to lean interface with the plurality of probes and outputting a plurality of signals from each probe characteristic of the fat to lean interface.

[c2] The method for trimming fat as recited in Claim 1 further

comprising the steps of:
receiving the plurality of signals from each probe to a controller and controlling with the controller a blade assembly having a blade attached thereto to adjust the position of the blade responsive to the signal.

[c3] The method for trimming fat as recited in Claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
holding down and conveying the meat cut with a hold down assembly positioned above the multi belt conveyor where said hold down assembly has an endless hold down track powered by a hold down drive.

[c4] A method for classifying a meat cut and trimming the fat therefrom comprising the steps of:
probing a meat cut with a probe assembly having a plurality of elongated laterally aligned probes operable to sense a fat to lean interface of a meat cut where each of said probes are aligned along one of a plurality of gaps between a plurality of proximately spaced conveyor belts;
selectively driving the probe assembly with a drive effecting elevation and lowering of the probe assembly along a circular path for insertion and retraction of the probes;
sensing the fat to lean interface of the meat cut being conveyed on the conveyor belts along a path of con-

veyance with the plurality of probes and outputting a plurality of signals from each probe characteristic of the fat to lean interface; and

holding down the meat cut with an endless hold down track powered by a drive and operable to hold down and convey the meat cut during probing.

[c5] The method for trimming fat as recited in Claim 4 further comprising the steps of:

tipping the probe's tip forward along the path of conveyance with the conveyance of the meat cut during insertion in the meat cut.

[c6] A method for classifying a meat cut and trimming the fat therefrom comprising the steps of:

probing a meat cut with a probe assembly having a plurality of elongated laterally aligned probes operable to sense a fat to lean interface of the meat cut where each of said probes are aligned along one of a plurality of gaps between a plurality of proximately spaced conveyor belts;

selectively driving the probe assembly with a drive effecting elevation and lowering of the probe assembly along a circular path for insertion and retraction of the probes;

sensing the fat to lean interface of the meat cut being conveyed on the conveyor belts with the plurality of

probes and outputting a plurality of signals from each probe characteristic of the fat to lean interface; and controlling a blade assembly having a plurality of blade elements laterally aligned and each blade element aligned along one of the plurality of gaps along a path of conveyance downstream the probes, to adjust the cutting position of the plurality of blade elements responsive to the plurality of signals from the probe assembly characteristic of the fat to lean interface for trimming fat from the meat cut.

[c7] The method for trimming fat as recited in Claim 6 further comprising the steps of:
holding down and conveying the meat cut with a hold down assembly positioned above the multi belt conveyor where said hold down assembly has an endless hold down track powered by a hold down drive.